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ABSTRACT

This series tracks the performance of Chicago, Illinois, public high school students from 1993 to 2000 using data from the last 2 years of Phase 1 reform as a baseline for looking at the first 5 years of Phase 2. This report tracks changes in high school enrollment and explores possible causes. Analyses of data from various sources show that the introduction of the promotion gate policy to Chicago Public Schools elementary schools in the 1995-1996 school year had a profound effect on high school enrollment. As lower achieving eighth graders were retained or sent to Academic Preparatory Centers, the size of ninth grade cohorts shrank. Successive grades were affected as smaller cohorts moved through high school. The better-prepared students who did make it to grade 9 were less likely to spend more than 4 years in high school than in the past, further depressing enrollment. As a result of this reduction in high school course repetition, the increase in eighth-grade retention was not accompanied by a decline in graduation rates by age 18. Appendixes contain additional details on figures in the report and a summary of trends that affect high school enrollment. (SLD)

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The State of Chicago Public High Schools: 1993 to 2000

DECLINING HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT: An Exploration of Causes

ED 470 294

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May 2002

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Declining High School Enrollment: An Exploration of Causes

The State of Chicago Public High Schools: 1993 to 2000

Elaine M. Allensworth
Shazia Rafiullah Miller

May 2002

Series Summary

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Series Summary:
The State of Chicago Public High Schools: 1993 to 2000

THE WAVE OF REFORMS THAT FIRST HIT THE CHICAGO Public Schools in the late 1980s focused primarily on greater local control over schools. During this period (Phase I), there was considerable improvement in Chicago public elementary schools. Change in the high schools, however, was minimal. Beginning in 1995, a second wave of reform (Phase II) focused on strong mayoral control, high stakes accountability, and increased attention from system administrators. Phase II included the systemwide redesign of high schools.

This series tracks the performance of Chicago public high school students from 1993 to 2000 using data from the last two years of Phase I reform as a baseline for looking at the first five years of Phase II. Each report in *The State of Chicago Public Schools: 1993 to 2000* series makes up part of a comprehensive picture of how high schools changed under Phase II. This report tracks changes in high school enrollment and explores possible causes. *Student Performance: Course Taking, Test Scores, and Outcomes* looks at how student performance has changed on a variety of measures. *Changing Special Education Enrollments: Causes and Distribution among Schools*, examines the increase in the percent of students eligible for special education services and their distribution across schools.

Declining High School Enrollment

Declining High School Enrollment: An Exploration of Causes documents changes in high school enrollment from 1993 to 2000 and examines why they occurred. Analysis shows that the introduction of the promotion gate policy to CPS elementary schools in the 1995–96 school year had a profound effect on high school enrollment. As lower achieving eighth-grade students were retained or sent to APCs, the size of ninth-grade cohorts shrank. Successive grades were affected as smaller cohorts moved through high school. The better-prepared students who did make it to grade nine were less likely to spend more than four years in high school than in the past, thereby further depressing enrollment. As a result of this reduction in high school course repetition, the increase in eighth-grade retention was not accompanied by a decline in graduation rates by age 18.

Other Reports in the Series

Student Performance

Student Performance: Course Taking, Test Scores, and Outcomes shows that in recent years high school eligible students in Chicago's public schools improved on a number of measures. **These trends exist even though we include in our analyses the students who dropped out of school between eighth and ninth grade, or were sent to Academic Preparatory Centers.** More students were on track their first year after elementary school (received no more than one failing grade in a core course and had enough credits to assume sophomore status on time), passed the algebra/

geometry sequence by the end of their second year, and passed an honors class sometime in their first year. Somewhat more students also completed a college preparatory program and passed an honors or advanced placement course over four years. The percent of students graduating by age 18 rose slightly, and the percent of students dropping out by age 18 fell slightly. Finally, the average score on the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency (TAP) rose substantially for the subset of students who enrolled in the ninth grade.

Overall, this is good news for Chicago public high schools—students' likelihood of succeeding in school has increased. At the same time, this "good news" is qualified by the fact that student performance itself, even by 2000, was still very poor on most measures. Fewer than half of all students graduated, barely half were on track after their freshman year, and the dropout rate remained above 40 percent.

When measuring the effects of high school reform policies, the news is mixed. Policies aimed at bringing in better-prepared students appear to have worked well and account for much of the improvement in student performance. The system's redesign of high schools in 1997, however, appears to have had only a modest impact on increasing the rate of the development of students' skills. The rates at which students graduated, stayed on track, passed the algebra/geometry sequence, and completed a college preparatory program appear to be, in part, due to something besides better-prepared students. On the other hand, the increase in the frequency with which students took honors and advanced placement courses seems to have occurred primarily as a result of students leaving elementary school better prepared for high school.

No particular *type* of school (neighborhood, vocational, charter or small, extended elementary, or selective admissions) was especially effective at improving students' performance on the TAP; individual schools from each category stood out. When looking at dropout rates, however, there is a noticeable pattern. Charter schools had substantially lower dropout rates after controlling for the characteristics of their incoming students. Selective admissions schools also did well. While Academic Preparatory Centers (APCs) generally had mixed results, a few had more success than expected in keeping their students from dropping out.

Enrollment and Distribution of Special Education Students

Changing Special Education Enrollments: Causes and Distribution among Schools examines in detail the upward trend of special education enrollment in high schools. The enrollment of students with disabilities in ninth grade increased substantially over the period of our study, from 11.5 percent in the 1993–94 school year, to 16.4 percent in 1999–00. During this period, a larger percentage of elementary students were identified as having learning disabilities, particularly in the later grades. Although the proportion of students with disabilities that was retained only rose slightly, the proportion of general education students that was retained or sent to an APC rose dramatically. Moreover, students with disabilities were heavily concentrated in neighborhood high schools (rather than selective admissions, charter, small, or extended elementary schools). Eleven neighborhood high schools, all on probation and located in areas with disproportionately high levels of low-income residents, experienced an especially large increase in their enrollment of students with special needs—from 16.3 percent in the 1993–94 school year, to 30.1 percent in 1999–00. The overall growth of special education enrollment across the system resulted in the increased separation of students with learning disabilities from general education students in high school classrooms, especially in schools where a larger proportion of students with disabilities was served.

The Unexpected Consequence of Reform Policies

Looking across the reports, we see that some of the most dramatic changes in CPS high schools between 1993 and 2000 were the consequences of changes in CPS elementary schools. This is especially pronounced when looking at the long-term impact of the eighth-grade promotion gate adopted by the system in 1995–96.

One of the anticipated consequences of the policy to end social promotion was a student population better prepared to cope with the demands of high school. In *Student Performance*, trends in graduation, course-taking, and test scores all show improvement, much of which is attributable to better-prepared students in the high schools. On the other hand, *Declining High School Enrollment* shows that high school enrollment declined substantially between 1993 and 2000 due in part to fewer students passing the promotion gate and, because those who did enroll were better prepared and less likely to repeat a grade, students moved through the system more quickly. In *Changing Special Education Enrollments*, we see that although the general education students who enrolled in high school were better prepared, they comprised a smaller percentage of incoming ninth graders. Because relatively fewer general education students were being promoted, high schools enrolled a greater concentration of students with disabilities. This is especially true for those high schools whose traditional enrollment was made up of mostly low achieving students who were not passing the promotion gate. The higher concentration of students with disabilities made their inclusion in general education classrooms more complex and difficult.

The reverberating effects of the eighth-grade promotion gate show that before the system adopts a policy to prompt change in the elementary schools, it should be considered in light of its possible long-term effects on high schools

New Information on CPS High Schools

Outcomes for the 2000–01 school year show no substantial difference from the trends presented in these reports, with the exception of the distribution of students with disabilities being significantly less focused on neighborhood high schools. Updated data for 2000–01 will be posted on the Consortium's website (www.consortium-chicago.org). A planned fourth report in this series will look more specifically at the climate inside high schools. The projected date for this report's publication is January 2003.

I. Decline in Enrollment: The Magnitude of Loss

OVER THE FIRST HALF OF THE 1990s, ENROLLMENT IN Chicago public high schools was fairly stable. In the fall of the 1997–98 school year, it dropped substantially and continued to decline dramatically through the fall of 1999–00, the last year of this study. This occurred in spite of relatively steady eighth-grade enrollment. Obviously something dramatic was taking place in the high schools.

Was the decline the result of an increase in students dropping out? More students leaving the system after elementary school? Or simply of demographic shifts in the population of eligible students?

In total, enrollment dropped by 11.5 percent over the last four years of the decade, from 106,429 students in the fall of the 1995–96 school year, to 94,223 students in the fall of 1999–00 (see Figure 1).[1] In this report we explore the forces that impacted enrollment during the period of decline. We contrast the influence of each on class size and examine implications for long-term student outcomes.

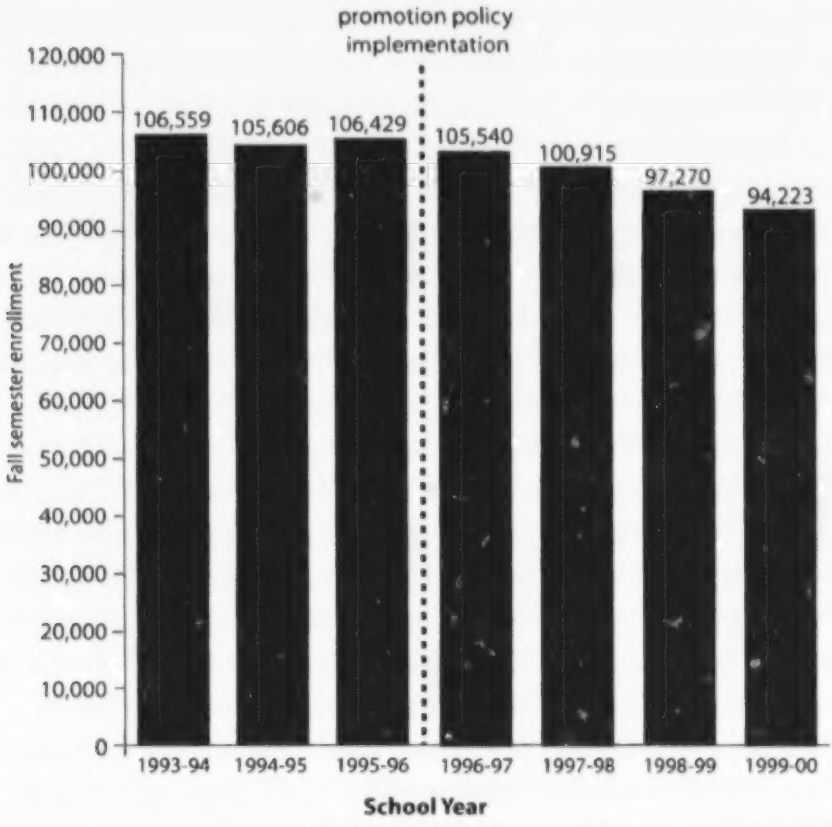
Which Schools Experienced the Sharpest Decline?

Figure 2 displays a school-by-school list of enrollment change between the 1995–96 and 1999–00 school years, the period of enrollment decline. (See Appendix I for details on the percentage change in enrollment for each school.) Schools are grouped by type—neighborhood, probation, selective admissions, charter and small, and extended elementary—and ordered from lowest to highest. Of the different types, schools on academic probation experienced the largest drop in enrollment, averaging 20.6 percent fewer students in the fall of the 1999–00 school year than in the fall of 1995–96, the year before the trend in declining enrollment began.[2] Neighborhood schools lost an average of 10.4 percent of their students over this same period. Nearly every neighborhood and probation school had a decline in enrollment.

Some of the loss these schools experienced occurred because of the creation of new charter, extended elementary, and magnet schools. All of the charter, small, and extended elementary schools, and three of the selective admissions schools (Bronzeville Military Academy, Northside College Prep, and Gwendolyn Books College Prep) were established between the 1995–96 and 1999–00 schools years. Several pre-existing selective admissions high schools also increased their enrollment over this period. The only two schools in this category that experienced a decline were former neighborhood schools that were converted into college preparatory magnet schools during this period.

Figure 1

High School Enrollment Declines between 1993-94 and 1999-00 School Years



Classification of CPS High Schools by School Type

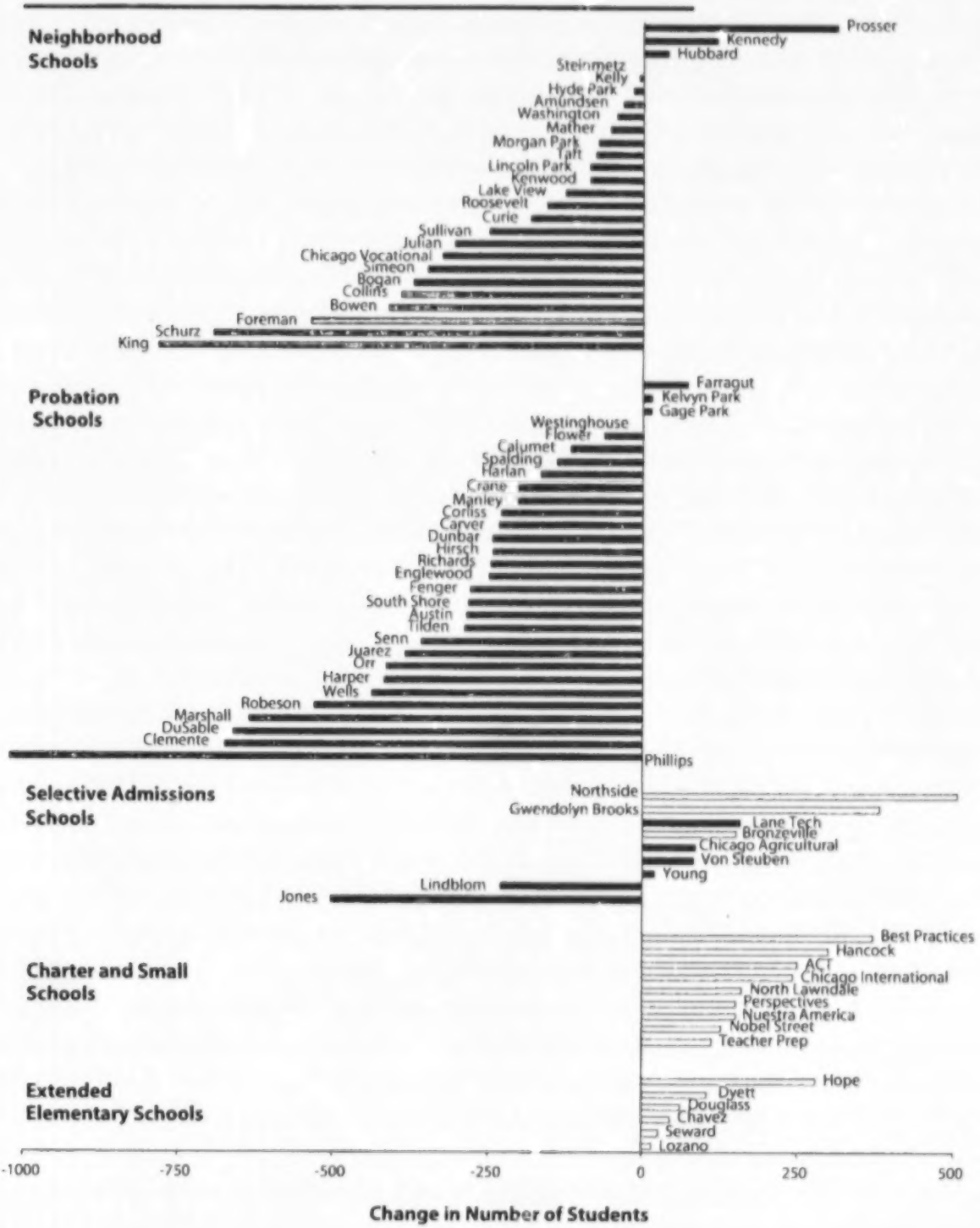
Schools are classified as **probation schools** if they were on probation during the 1999–00 school year. Under the CPS probation policy, schools with less than 15 percent of their students meeting national norms on the Tests of Achievement and Proficiency are placed on probation and monitored until their scores exceed the threshold or they show significant growth in other areas of school improvement. These schools face the threat of sanctions, but also receive extra resources to finance improvement efforts and work with external partners.

Neighborhood schools serve the general population from their surrounding area, but had adequate test scores to avoid probation in 1999–00. They have no admissions requirements. **Vocational and technical schools** have specific missions to prepare students for a particular career but, like neighborhood schools, they usually enroll students from their own geographic areas. Although some vocational and technical schools have admissions requirements, their entering students tend to have achievement levels that are similar to regular neighborhood high schools. Therefore, we classify them as neighborhood schools (or as probation schools if on probation).

Extended elementary schools are grade schools that include a ninth grade. They were established to ease students' transition to high school and generally enroll ninth graders from their own eighth-grade classes. **Charter schools** are exempt from many of the regulations placed on regular CPS high schools, but they are not allowed to use selection criteria in their admissions. Charter schools were developed with individual missions to serve different populations. **Selective admissions schools** were established to attract and keep academically talented students in public high schools. Their enrollment is academically selective.

Figure 2

Change in Enrollment by School
1995-96 to 1999-00



On probation at some time during this period

Opened between 1995-96 and 1999-00

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Which Grades Showed the Greatest Loss?

High school enrollment decreased most in grades nine and ten, declining by about 15 percent between 1995–96 and 1998–99 (see Figure 3).[3] At the same time, eighth-grade enrollment was fairly steady. Some of the ninth-grade enrollment loss occurred because many low achieving students entered Academic Preparatory Centers (APCs) instead of ninth grade, a result of the promotion gate policy. Enrollment in grades nine and ten rose again in the 1999–00 school year, but only because of a policy change to reclassify all previously ungraded special education students into traditional grades. If not for this policy, enrollment in these grades would have declined further.

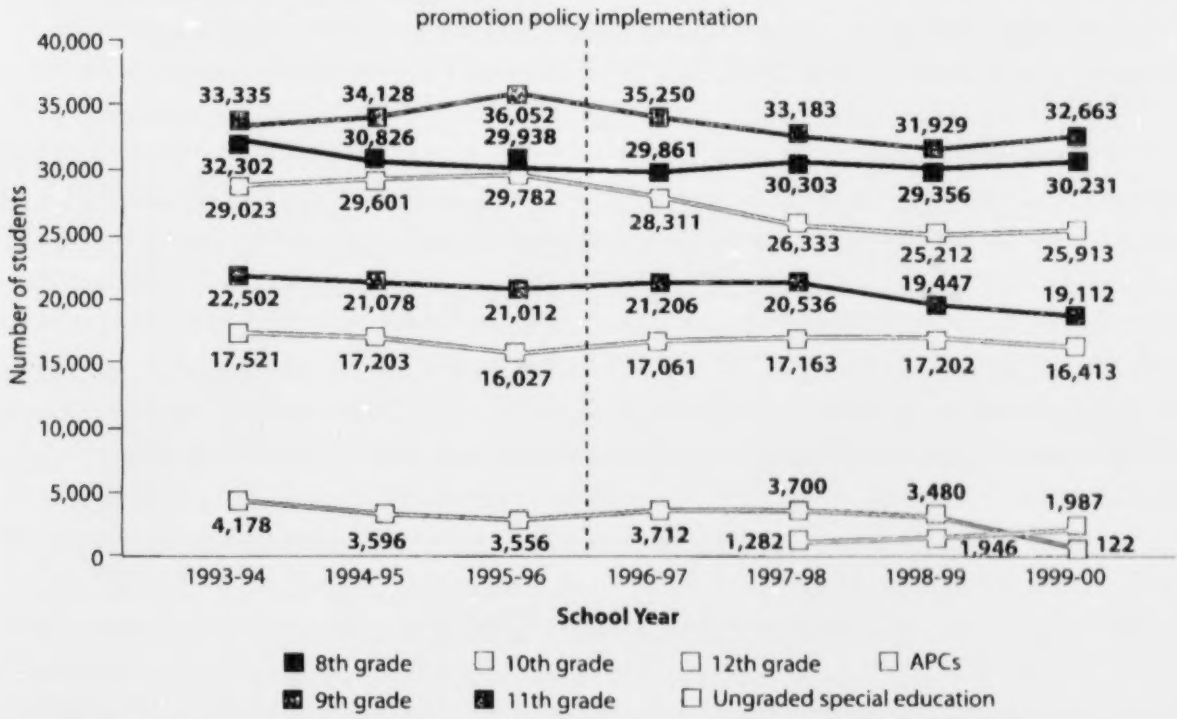
Declining enrollment in the ninth and tenth grades affected enrollment in upper grades when fewer freshmen and sophomores were eligible to advance. Eleventh-grade enrollment began dropping in 1997–98, and the twelfth grade showed a decline in 1999–00. However, the magnitude of loss was much smaller in grades eleven and twelve than in grades nine and ten.

The CPS Promotion Gate Policy

In 1996, the Chicago Public Schools began an ambitious initiative aimed at ending social promotion and raising student achievement. Its centerpiece was a set of promotional cut-off test scores for third, sixth, and eighth graders. Students in these grades had to achieve a minimum score on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills in order to be promoted to the next grade. Those who did not meet the criteria were required to participate in a special summer school program, Summer Bridge, and retake the test at the end of the summer. Those who failed again could be retained or, if they were 15, sent to transitional schools called Academic Preparatory Centers. At the same time, substantial new resources were made available to schools, including funds for expanded summer and after-school programs. In the first two years of the policy, there were also cut-off test scores for promotion from the ninth to tenth grade. The ninth grade requirement was subsequently dropped in 1998.

Figure 3

High School Enrollment Declines Most in Grades Nine and Ten



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II. Factors Affecting Enrollment

A NUMBER OF FACTORS CAN REDUCE HIGH SCHOOL enrollment. These include smaller eighth-grade cohorts moving on to high school; fewer students entering CPS high schools from outside the system; more students leaving CPS for other schools; more students dropping out; an increase in the retention of eighth graders; and an increase in high school grade promotion.[4]

Trends for CPS in each of these factors are described in detail in Appendix II. To compare their relative impact on high school enrollment, we calculate what the enrollment for each year would have been if that factor had not changed since the fall of 1995 while keeping all other factors at their actual levels. Fall 1995 is used as the base for comparisons because the downward trend in enrollment started the following year. A simple example of our method is detailed in the sidebar, "How to Read Enrollment Change Charts: Why Ninth-Grade Enrollment Declined in 1996–97."

Which Factors Had the Greatest Impact on Ninth-Grade Enrollment?

Between 1996 and 2000, the eighth-grade promotion gate had by far the most significant impact on ninth-grade enrollment (see Figure 4). Many more students remained in eighth grade or went to APCs instead of entering high school. Its effect was strongest in fall 1998, when almost 2,900 fewer students advanced from eighth grade and APCs to ninth grade than would have if the promotion rate had remained at its fall 1995 level.

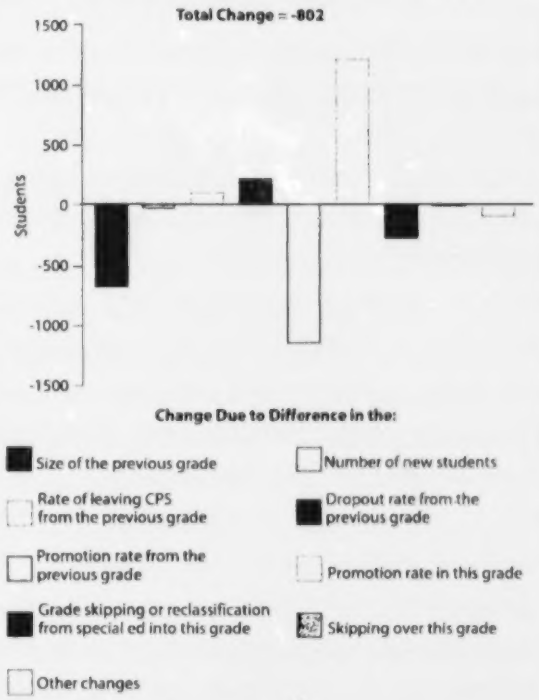
Although eighth-grade retention had the largest effect on ninth-grade enrollment, other factors also were influential. Eighth-grade cohort size contributed to declining ninth-grade enrollment during the first two years of decline. Because there were fewer eighth graders in 1995–96 and 1996–97 than in 1994–95, fewer enrolled in ninth grade in fall 1996 and fall 1997. With the implementation of the promotion gate, students began "stacking up" in eighth grade and APCs. In later years, this had a positive effect on ninth-grade enrollment, offsetting some of the impact of eighth-grade retention.

Ninth-grade promotion rates also had a substantial effect on ninth-grade enrollment figures. Promotion rates changed as a result of the new credit requirements adopted in 1995–96, the implementation of the ninth-grade promotion gate in 1996–97, and the gate's repeal in 1998–99. Initially, because fewer students were meeting the criteria for promotion to the tenth grade, the new promotion policies boosted the number of students that were classified as ninth graders and buffered the impact of eighth-grade retention on ninth-grade enrollment figures. After the gate was removed, students were much more likely to be promoted to tenth grade than in previous years. Although ninth-grade enrollment was affected, the qualitative impact on students and schools was not

How to Read Enrollment Change Charts: Why Ninth-Grade Enrollment Declined in 1996–97

To illustrate our method with a simple example, we look at the impact of each factor on one grade over one year—the figure below presents the change in ninth-grade enrollment from fall 1995 to fall 1996. In the figure, the size of each bar is calculated by determining what the enrollment in 1996–97 would have been if that factor had remained unchanged from the previous year while keeping all other factors at their actual fall 1996 levels. **The total change in ninth-grade enrollment between 1995–96 and 1996–97 was a decline of 802 students.**

Change in Ninth Grade Enrollment in Fall 1996 Compared to Fall 1995
By reason for difference



SIZE OF THE PREVIOUS GRADE shows the cohort effect, or the change in the number of eighth graders who could have advanced to the ninth grade. There were fewer eighth graders in 1995–96 than in 1994–95. This caused ninth-grade enrollment to decline by about 700 in 1996–97. The bar in the figure representing this change is not exactly equal to the change in eighth-grade enrollment between 1994–95 and 1995–96, as the impact of cohort size also depended on dropout, retention, and leave rates for the eighth grade.

NUMBER OF NEW STUDENTS is the change in the number of students enrolling in a Chicago public high school from outside of the system. About 30 fewer ninth graders transferred into CPS in fall 1996 than in fall 1995.

RATE OF LEAVING CPS FROM THE PREVIOUS GRADE shows the change in the number of students transferring out of CPS into another district. Compared to 1994–95, fewer eighth graders left CPS at the end of 1995–96, and so more students enrolled in ninth grade in fall 1996.

DROPOUT RATE FROM THE PREVIOUS GRADE shows that a slightly smaller percentage of eighth graders dropped out between fall 1995 and fall 1996 than in the previous year. These factors boosted ninth-grade enrollment by about 250.

PROMOTION RATE FROM THE PREVIOUS GRADE shows the effect of higher eighth-grade retention. The promotion gate policy was adopted in the spring of 1996 and about 1,800 eighth graders were not promoted that year. In contrast, only 700 were held back in spring 1995. This accounts for about 1,100 fewer students enrolling in ninth grade in fall 1996.

PROMOTION RATE IN THIS GRADE shows the effect of an increase in students' failure to meet the criteria for promotion to tenth grade. In 1996–97, about 1,200 more students continued to be classified as ninth graders than had repeated ninth-grade classification the previous year.

The remaining factors represent unconventional changes in student grade assignments. GRADE SKIPPING OR RECLASSIFICATION FROM SPECIAL EDUCATION INTO THIS GRADE shows change in the movement of students into ninth grade from grades lower than eight and from ungraded special education. This bar mostly shows a drop in skipping from seventh to ninth grade, probably as a result of the eighth-grade promotion gate. SKIPPING OVER THIS GRADE shows the negligible difference in the number of students that skipped ninth-grade classification altogether. OTHER CHANGES represents changes in miscellaneous outcomes and record keeping. This includes changes in the number of students who were incarcerated or deceased, reclassified to a lower grade (usually the result of a correction in record keeping), and reclassified into ungraded special education. There were slightly more students in these categories in 1996–97 than in 1995–96, causing a small decline in ninth-grade enrollment.

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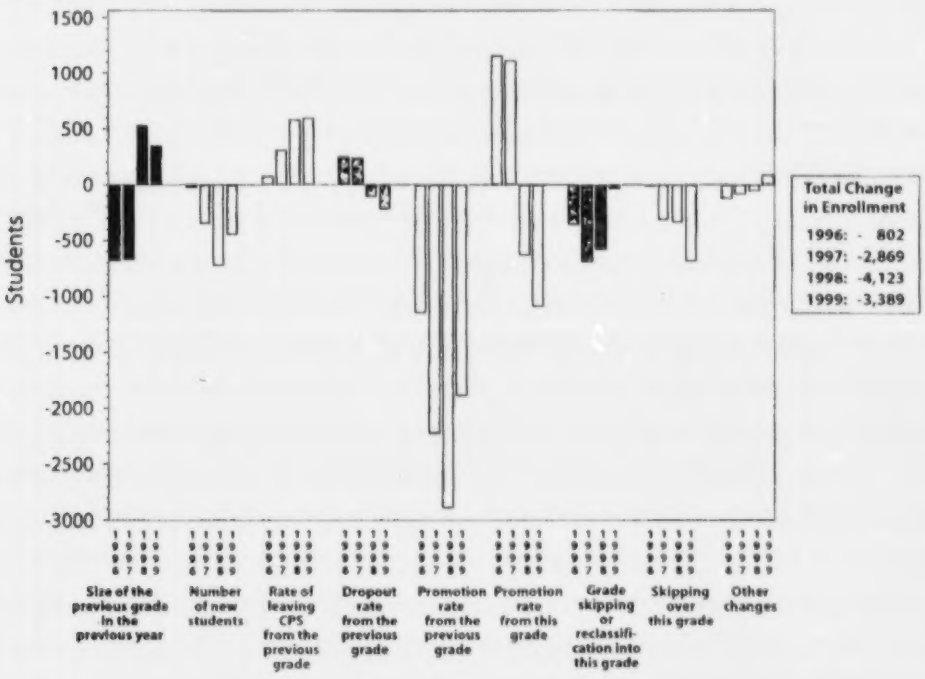
Figure 4
Factors Affecting Ninth-Grade Enrollment
Fall 1996 to Fall 1999 Compared to Fall 1995



the same as with eighth-grade retention. Because repeating ninth graders could still take higher level courses, total high school enrollment was not affected, as these students normally would have moved on to the tenth grade.

Two smaller contradictory trends also affected ninth-grade enrollment. Movement out of CPS into other school districts between eighth and ninth grade declined between 1995 and 2000. Most of these students were high achievers who enrolled in new magnet high schools.[5] At the same time, the number of new students entering CPS high schools from other districts declined.

What Caused Enrollment to Decline in Grades Ten through Twelve?

Most of the enrollment decline in grades ten through twelve can be attributed to the implementation of the promotion gate policy. Delays in entering ninth grade had ripple effects on enrollment in higher grades in later years as smaller cohorts moved through high school. Students were less likely to repeat a grade-level classification and so were less likely to require an additional year of high school, thereby further depressing enrollment. This was partially a result of the eighth-grade promotion gate policy, but other CPS policies implemented during this period, such as increased funding of credit recovery programs for off-track students and new course requirements, also are likely to have contributed to the decline in grade repetition.[6]

Grade Ten: Smaller Ninth-Grade Cohorts, Higher Dropout and Promotion Rates, and Fewer New Students

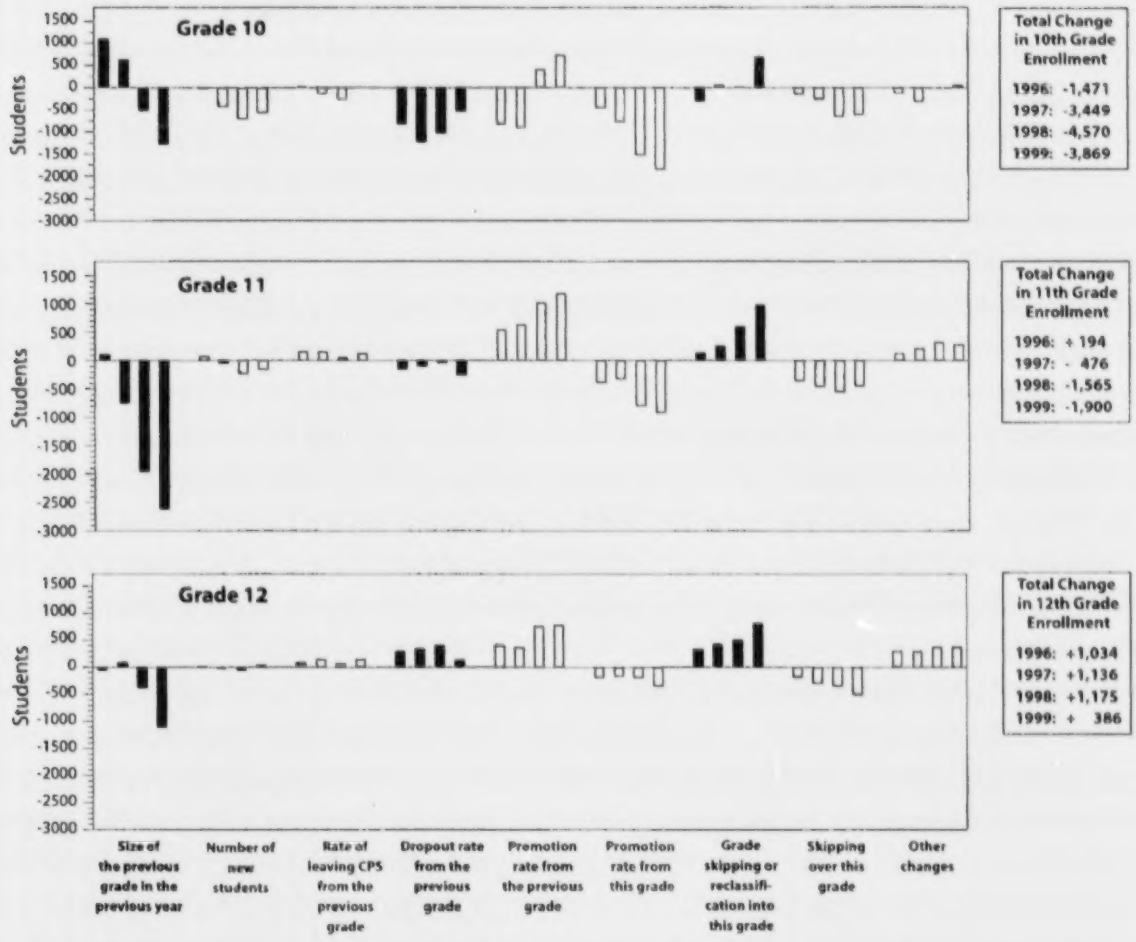
As with enrollment in the ninth grade, enrollment in grade ten also declined substantially after 1995–96. Beginning in the 1998–99 school year, part of this drop can be attributed to smaller ninth-grade cohorts (see Figure 5). With ninth-grade enrollment decreasing sharply in 1997–98, fewer students could advance to tenth grade in 1998–99.

In 1996–97 and 1997–98, tenth-grade enrollment had not yet felt the effects of the decline in the number of ninth-grade students—there were actually more ninth graders in fall 1995 and 1996 that could have moved on to tenth grade than there were in fall 1994. Enrollment declined in 1996–97 and 1997–98 for three other reasons: compared to 1995–96, fewer ninth graders were

Figure 5

Factors Affecting Enrollment in Grades Ten through Twelve

Effect on Enrollment: Fall 1996 to Fall 2000 Compared to Fall 1995



promoted to tenth grade, more tenth graders were promoted to eleventh grade, and more ninth-grade students dropped out of school instead of moving on to the tenth grade. In later years, the rate of promotion from ninth to tenth grade increased, but this was more than overshadowed by the continuing increase in the rate of promotion to the eleventh grade, high ninth-grade dropout rates, and a decline in the number of new students transferring into the system at tenth grade.

Grades Eleven and Twelve: Smaller Cohorts and Higher Promotion Rates

Most of the decline in enrollment in grades eleven and twelve occurred as the result of shrinking ninth- and tenth-grade cohorts. Also, as with the tenth grade, beginning fall 1996 students were increasingly likely to be promoted from the eleventh and twelfth grades, to earn enough credits to have their grade classification changed mid-year, or to advance two grade levels in one year by making up lost credits and taking extra courses. Dropout rates also decreased for eleventh graders. However, while this slight change boosted

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twelfth-grade enrollment, it was more than offset by the rise in the ninth-grade dropout rate.

Overall, much of the decline in total high school enrollment can be attributed to the implementation of the eighth-grade promotion gate. During the first few years of the policy, increasing numbers of students were kept from enrolling in the ninth grade. In subsequent years, this change had a ripple effect on the upper grades, both because of shrinking cohort size and because better-prepared students moved through high school with less repetition of grade classification. In addition, the delay of grade progression resulted in more students dropping out before entering high school or in ninth grade instead of moving on to higher grades.

Not all of the decline in high school enrollment was a consequence of the promotion gate policy, however. The more streamlined movement of students through high schools was likely a result of multiple CPS policies. In addition to the promotion gate, these included new course-taking requirements, recovery funds, and new magnet schools. Moreover, there was a decline in the number of students transferring into CPS high schools from outside the system. This may be related to the promotion gate policy if high schools required testing prior to admission. The timing of the decline in new students suggests that there may be a relationship, but our data cannot determine it.

III. Students' Progression Through High School

HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT DECLINED IN LARGE PART because of changes in the progression of students from eighth to twelfth grade; that is, higher eighth-grade repetition rates as well as higher rates of ninth- through twelfth-grade promotion. We generally think of students progressing through high school in an orderly and predictable way, like marching in a straight line from "beginning" to "end," but there are several possible moves a student can make as he or she moves from one year to the next.

Most go on to the next grade, although a substantial number do not have enough credits to be promoted. Others drop out or transfer to another district, but they may return a few years later. Standard statistics on graduation and dropout rates are snapshots of the aggregate movements a group of students has made by a particular date. By looking at changes in the patterns of students' movement through high school, we can see how the forces underlying the enrollment decline—changes in grade promotion, transfer, and dropout rates—affected students' progress toward graduation.

In Figure 6 we compare the progress of different cohorts of students over time, starting with the cohort that was 13 years old in September 1991 all the way through the cohort that was 13 in September 1998. Although our trend analysis begins in the 1993–94 school year, we include cohorts that enrolled in high school prior to 1993–94 because most of these students were in grades ten through twelve in 1993–94 and their movements affected the trends reported here.[7] The 1995 cohort is the latest for which six years of data are available. Cohorts after 1995 are traced for fewer years, up through fall 2001. Although we discuss enrollment trends only through fall 1999, we include data from the most recent years in this comparison in order to discern any long-term implications of enrollment trends on student movement through school.

Outcomes should be compared across cohorts at a specific age. For example, by age 16, 27 percent of the 1991 cohort was off schedule for graduation. This compares to 29 percent of the 1992, 1993 and 1994 cohorts, 28 percent of the 1995 cohort, and 29 percent of the 1996, 1997, and 1998 cohorts. Looking at the progress of cohorts in this way, we can see that there was very little change in the percentage of students off schedule for graduation at age 16.

Contradictory Promotion Trends

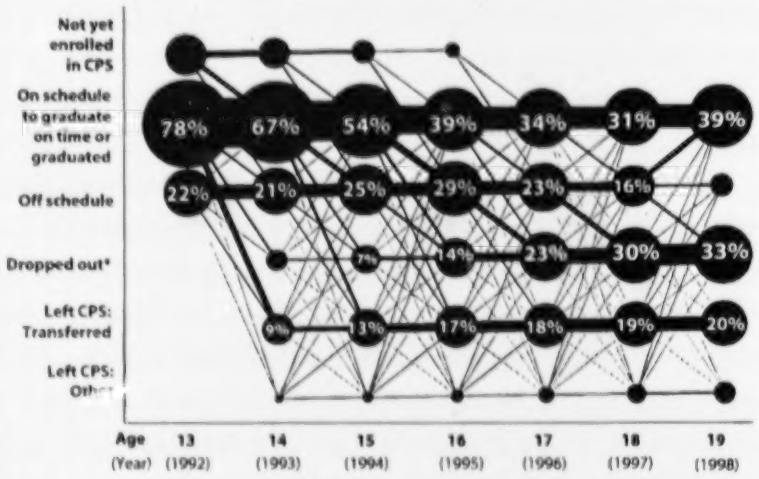
In general, the different cohorts' patterns of movement are very similar. The only substantial shift is the percentage of students off schedule for graduation prior to age 16. In the 1991 and 1992

How to Read the Student Progression Charts: The Progress of the Class of 1997

The figure below tracks the dynamic patterns of movement of one cohort of students—those who were 13 years old in September 1992—over six years, until September 1998. Circles represent the proportion of students that attained each outcome in each year, while lines represent year-to-year movement between different outcomes. The sizes of the circles and lines are proportionate to the number of students they represent.

In September of 1992, there were 31,257 13-year-olds actively enrolled in CPS. Seventy-eight percent of these students were in the eighth grade. These students were "on schedule" to graduate by age 18. They are represented by the circle in the row labeled "On Schedule" and the column labeled "Age 13." The remaining 22 percent of the cohort was not yet in eighth grade; most of these students had been held back in earlier years. They are represented by the smaller circle in the row labeled "Off Schedule."

Progression of 13-Year-Old Students Beginning Fall 1992
High school class of 1997



Paths for dropout, leave CPS, and other active groups are not displayed unless they represent more than 1 percent of students; number for 5 percent or less are not shown.

By the following year, when these students were 14 years old, 67 percent were on schedule to graduate by age 18. That is, they were in ninth grade. Another 21 percent of the cohort was actively enrolled in CPS but still in elementary school. Four percent had dropped out, 9 percent had transferred to another school district, and less than 1 percent had experienced some other outcome (institutionalization, incarceration, death). By age 15, 54 percent of the original cohort was in tenth grade, 25 percent was enrolled in a grade lower than ten, 7 percent had dropped out, and 13 percent had transferred. By age 16, 39 percent was in eleventh grade, 29 percent was enrolled in a grade lower than eleven, 14 percent had dropped out, and 17 percent had transferred. By age 17, 34 percent of the cohort was in twelfth grade, 23 percent was in a grade lower than twelve, 23 percent had dropped out, and 18 percent had left the system for another school. In the fall of 1997, by age 18, 31 percent of the original cohort had graduated, 16 percent was still enrolled, 30 percent had dropped out, and 19 percent had left the system. By the fall of 1998, most of the remaining active students had either graduated or dropped out, bringing the total percent that graduated to 39 and the percent that dropped out to 33.* Four percent was still enrolled, 20 percent had transferred out of CPS, and 4 percent had experienced other outcomes.

We account for students who had not enrolled in CPS at the time the cohort was defined, but who entered the system some time after age 13. These students comprised 15 percent of the final cohort; about half entered at age 14, while the remainder entered at older ages.

*Reported statistics on dropout and graduation rates do not include transfers in their calculation. To calculate dropout or graduation rates using this chart, divide the percentage of students that dropped out or graduated by the sum of those that are on schedule, off schedule, graduated, and dropped out. In this example, the graduation rate at age 19 would be 39 ÷ (39 + 4 + 33), or 51.3 percent.

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cohorts, off-schedule rates did not approach 29 percent until age 16. However, in the 1993 and 1994 cohorts, 29 percent of the students were off schedule by age 15, a result of the decrease in promotion out of ninth grade. In the 1995 cohort, the first subject to the eighth-grade promotion gate, the effects of retention can be seen with higher off-schedule rates at age 14 than in the previous two cohorts. Increasing retention of eighth graders over the first several years of the policy resulted in even larger percentages of students in later cohorts to be off schedule at age 14. The 1998 cohort was the first to be impacted by the sixth-grade promotion gate (implemented in 1997). Almost one-quarter of these students were off schedule as early as age 13.

In spite of students falling off schedule earlier, the likelihood of graduating by age 18 was slightly higher in later years, with the exception of the 1996 cohort. Thirty to 31 percent of students in the 1991 and 1992 cohorts graduated by age 18, compared to 34 percent for the 1994 and 1995 cohorts. Most of the improvement in the graduation rate for 18-year-olds occurred because fewer students were still enrolled at age 18. Graduation rates for 18-year-olds declined slightly with the 1996 cohort, although they were still slightly higher than those of the 1991 and 1992 cohorts. It is too early to determine whether the trend will reverse, but patterns in movement by age 16 and 17 for the 1997 and 1998 cohorts show additional small improvements in the percent of students on schedule for graduation.

Getting Back On Schedule

While more students moved off schedule for graduation prior to age 16 in later cohorts, they were slightly more likely to be back on schedule to graduate by age 17 and 18. One explanation for the contradiction in these trends is that students in recent cohorts were more likely to catch up if they fell off schedule. That is, more students who fell behind or were held back by age 15 recovered from this setback by age 17.

Among the students in the 1991 and 1992 cohorts that were off schedule before age 15, around 43 percent was still off schedule at age 17. In comparison, only about 38 percent of students off schedule before 15 in the 1993 and 1994 cohorts was still off schedule at age 17 (see Figure 7). Therefore, although new ninth-grade requirements delayed the official progression of many more students in the 1993 and 1994 cohorts to the tenth grade, these students were more likely to be on schedule by age 17 than those who fell behind in earlier cohorts because of course failure.

The next cohort not only experienced low rates of promotion out of ninth grade, but also high rates of retention in the eighth grade. Therefore, an even larger percentage of its students was off schedule by age 15 than in previous cohorts. However, this cohort showed the best recovery rates of any. The following two cohorts, subject only to the eighth-grade gate, showed worse

Figure 6

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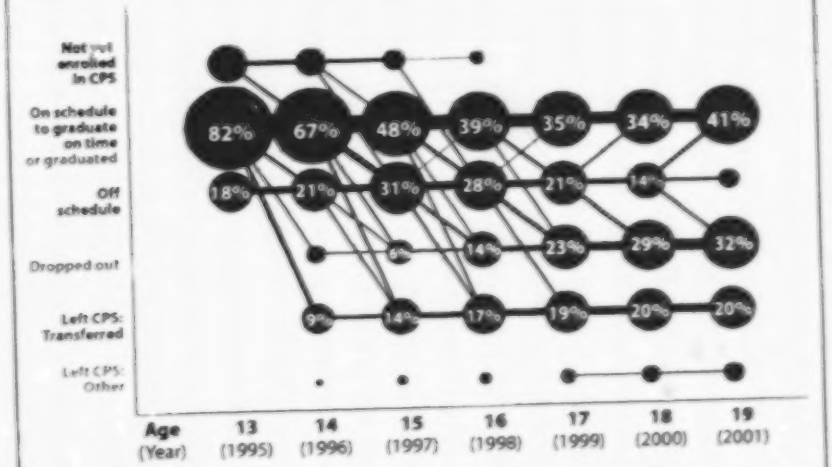
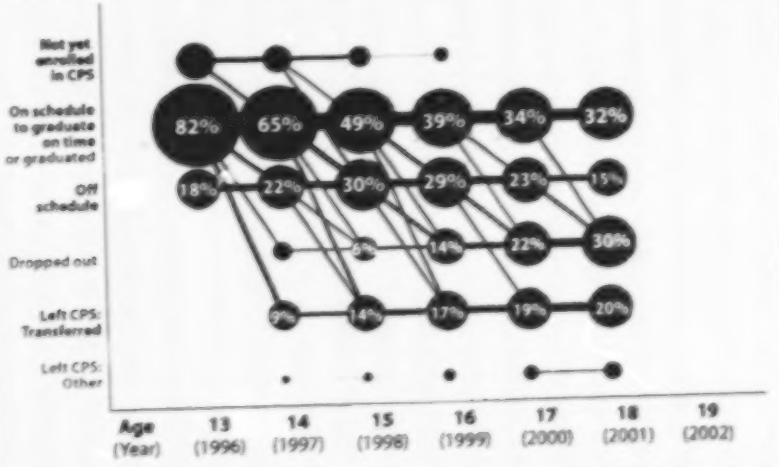
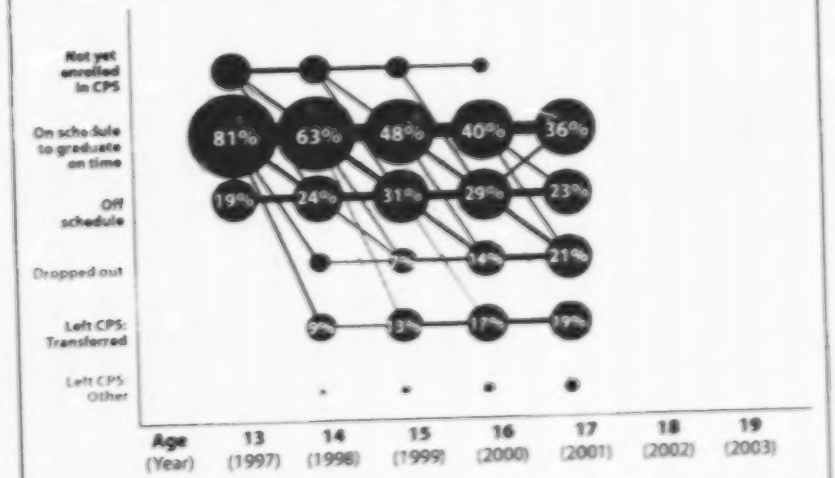
Progression of 13-Year-Olds: Beginning Fall 1995
High School Class of 2000



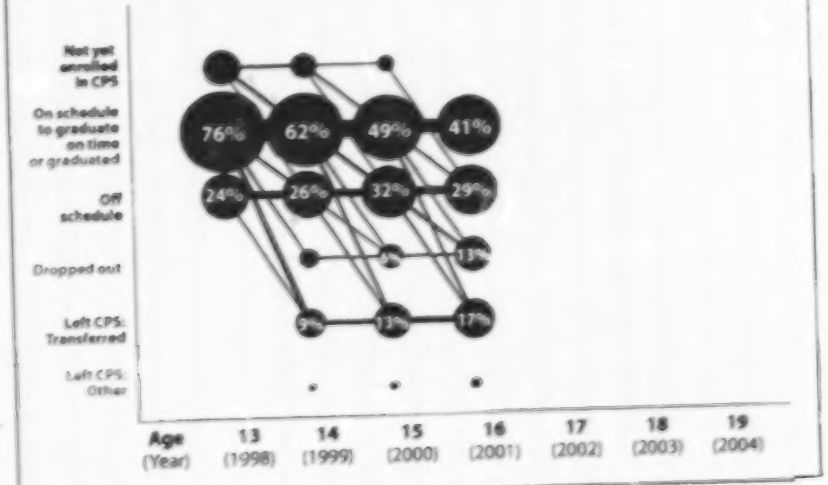
Progression of 13-Year-Olds: Beginning Fall 1996
High School Class of 2001



Progression of 13-Year-Olds: Beginning Fall 1997
High School Class of 2002



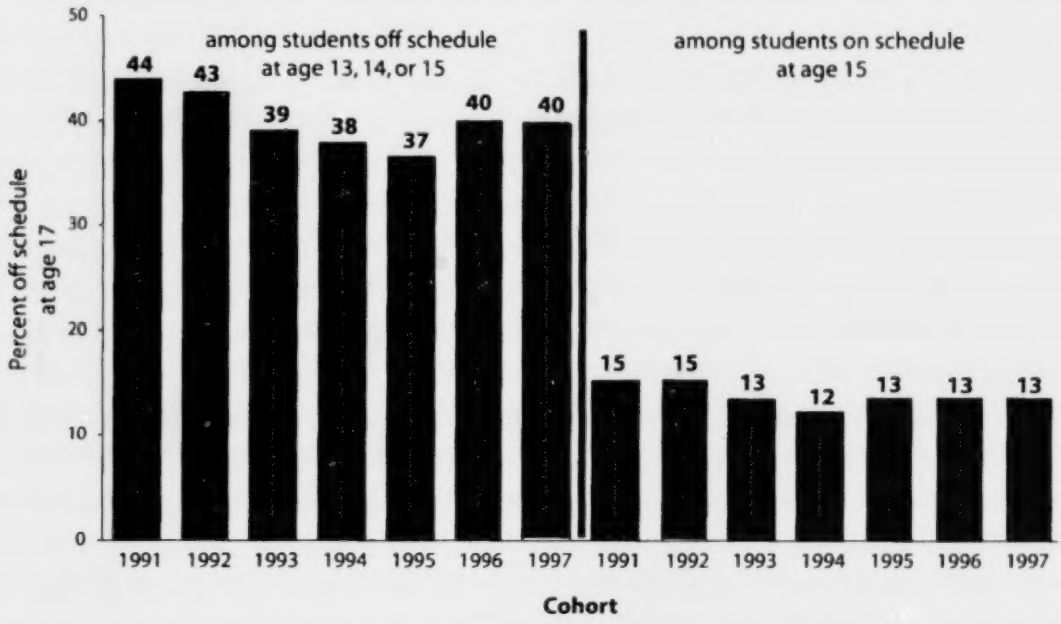
Progression of 13-Year-Olds: Beginning Fall 1998
High School Class of 2003



Paths for dropout, leave CPS, and other active groups are not displayed unless they represent more than 1 percent of students, numbers for 5 percent or less are not shown.

Figure 7

More Students Off Schedule by Age 15 Recover Status and Fewer Students Go Off Schedule for First Time between 15 and 17



recovery rates than those subject only to the ninth-grade gate, but better recovery rates than those not subject to any promotion gate at all.

Differences in the cohorts' recovery rates suggest that it was easier for students to recover from delays in grade progression that resulted from promotion gates than from traditional delays (i.e., course failure). In particular, students were most likely to recover from a repetition of ninth-grade classification, which did not restrict accumulation of credits for graduation. At the same time, there were also general increases in student course-taking and passing rates, as well as an increase in the system's funding of course recovery programs such as summer school and tutoring.

Additionally, on-schedule 15-year-olds in more recent cohorts were less likely to go off schedule by 17 than earlier cohorts. This may have resulted because very low achieving students who would have gone off schedule between 15 and 17 were more likely to be off schedule by 15 than in the past (and so the group that was not off schedule by 15 was smaller). Increases in student course-taking and passing rates, and the better preparation of students entering the high schools may also be factors.[8]

In summary, while patterns of students' movement toward graduation changed, their probability of graduating did not. Prior to the implementation of the eighth- and ninth-grade promotion gates, about 30 percent of students fell behind in their coursework by age 16. Afterwards, students were more likely to fall behind at an earlier age. Although dropout rates rose in ninth grade and pre-high school grades (eighth grade and APCs), students were not dropping out at an earlier age; only the grade they reached before they dropped out changed. For the first three cohorts affected by the eighth-grade promotion gate, higher promotion rates in high school more than

compensated for the slowdown in entry into ninth grade. It is too early to be certain that graduation rates will not decline with subsequent cohorts, particularly those that were subject to two promotion gates. On-schedule rates at age 16 suggest that the compensatory trends seen in the first several cohorts have continued. Therefore, the trends that had a strong effect on enrollment did not bring about any substantial change in CPS dropout and graduation rates by age.[9]

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IV. Interpretive Summary

FROM 1993 TO 2000, ENROLLMENT IN CHICAGO PUBLIC high schools declined substantially as patterns in students' movement through school shifted. The main cause of the decline was the policy to end social promotion that was implemented in 1996. This policy reduced high school enrollment in three ways.

First, more students were retained in eighth grade or sent to APCs, thereby decreasing the size of entering ninth-grade classes. Second, because many students were entering high school at older ages, students who dropped out were in high school for shorter periods of time, if at all. Third, once in high school, students were more likely to meet requirements for grade promotion, and so were more likely to graduate without delays. Several factors unrelated to the promotion policy also impacted high school enrollment, including a brief decline in eighth-grade enrollment and fewer new students entering Chicago public high schools.

These shifting dynamics did not result in worsening dropout and graduation rates. Although students in more recent cohorts fell off schedule earlier than previously, students in later cohorts were still as likely to graduate by age 18, and be on schedule at 16, as students in earlier cohorts. An increase in students' fulfillment of requirements for grade promotion was due in part to the social promotion policy, as the policy restricted more low achieving students from entering high school. Two other policies that were implemented at the same time, the creation of new magnet high schools and new course-taking requirements, also affected students' performance and, as a consequence, their progression through school. In addition, schools received new monies to finance programs to help students make up failed courses. These policies are discussed in detail in another report in this series, *Student Performance: Course Taking, Test Scores, and Outcomes.* We have not yet been able to isolate the effects of the social promotion policy from these other policy changes. Further Consortium work continues along this line.

Although graduation and dropout rates were not affected by declining enrollment, the changing patterns in students' movement through high school had other substantial outcomes. In particular, a decline in the number of general education students enrolled in the high schools affected the concentration of special education students in high school classrooms. Details on this phenomenon are presented in *Changing Special Education Enrollments: Causes and Distribution among Schools*, another report in this series. Other effects of declining enrollment on schools, such as changes in school climate and instruction will be addressed in future Consortium research.

Appendix I: Additional Details on Figures in the Report

Table for Figure 2: Change in Enrollment by School 1995-96 to 1999-00

School Type	School Name	Enrollment in 1995-96	Enrollment in 1999-00	Enrollment Change	Percent Change
Neighborhood	Prosser	1,007	1,319	312	31
	Kennedy	1,474	1,592	118	8
	Hubbard	1,618	1,655	37	2
	Steinmetz	2,288	2,288	0	0
	Kelly	2,263	2,254	- 9	0
	Hyde Park	1,889	1,871	- 18	- 1
	Amundsen	1,751	1,716	- 35	- 2
	Washington	1,569	1,525	- 44	- 3
	Mather	1,928	1,875	- 53	- 3
	Morgan Park	2,186	2,113	- 73	- 3
	Taft	1,789	1,711	- 78	- 4
	Lincoln Park	1,869	1,783	- 86	- 5
	Kenwood	1,953	1,865	- 88	- 5
	Lake View	1,195	1,070	- 125	-10
	Roosevelt	1,840	1,685	- 155	- 8
	Curie	3,215	3,032	- 183	- 6
	Sullivan	1,447	1,200	- 247	-17
	Julian	1,653	1,347	- 306	-19
	Chicago Vocational	2,609	2,286	- 323	-12
	Simeon	1,753	1,405	- 348	-20
	Bogan	2,172	1,801	- 371	-17
	Collins	1,236	846	- 390	-32
	Bowen	1,494	1,084	- 410	-27
	Foreman	2,070	1,535	- 535	-26
	Schurz	3,239	2,546	- 693	-21
	King	1,130	347	- 783	-69
Probation	Farragut	2,121	2,193	72	3
	Kelvyn Park	2,017	2,034	17	1
	Gage Park	1,450	1,461	11	1
	Westinghouse	1,404	1,403	- 1	0
	Flower	764	699	- 65	- 9
	Calumet	1,025	908	- 117	-11
	Spalding	669	528	- 141	-21
	Harlan	914	747	- 167	-18
	Crane	1,468	1,269	- 199	-14
	Manley	861	659	- 202	-23
	Corliss	1,305	1,078	- 227	-17
	Carver	960	728	- 232	-24
	Dunbar	2,094	1,853	- 241	-12
	Hirsch	829	587	- 242	-29
	Richards	814	568	- 246	-30
	Englewood	1,336	1,086	- 250	-19
	Fenger	1,103	826	- 277	-25
	South Shore	1,381	1,099	- 282	-20
	Austin	1,390	1,104	- 286	-21
	Tilden	1,413	1,126	- 287	-20
	Senn	2,216	1,859	- 357	-16
	Juarez	1,927	1,543	- 384	-20
	Orr	1,500	1,087	- 413	-28
	Harper	1,685	1,269	- 416	-25
	Wells	1,720	1,285	- 435	-25
	Robeson	1,447	920	- 527	-36
	Marshall	1,803	1,170	- 633	-35
	DuSable	1,636	977	- 659	-40
	Clemente	2,525	1,851	- 674	-27
	Phillips	1,771	748	-1,023	-58

Table for Figure 2: Change in Enrollment by School 1995-96 to 1999-00 (cont'd)

School Type	School Name	Enrollment in 1995-96	Enrollment in 1999-00	Enrollment Change	Percent Change
Selective	Northside	New	507	507	N/A
	Gwendolyn Brooks	New	386	386	N/A
	Lane Tech	4,099	4,257	158	4
	Bronzeville	New	149	149	N/A
	Chicago Agricultural	486	572	86	18
	Von Steuben	1,387	1,469	82	6
	Young	2,223	2,243	20	1
	Lindblom	977	747	-230	-24
	Jones	897	396	-501	-56
Charter/ Small	Best Practices	New	440	440	N/A
	Hancock	New	298	298	N/A
	ACT	New	251	251	N/A
	Chicago International	New	244	244	N/A
	North Lawndale	New	159	159	N/A
	Perspectives	New	149	149	N/A
	Nuestra America	New	149	149	N/A
	Nobel Street	New	126	126	N/A
	Teacher Prep	New	110	110	N/A
Extended Elementary	Hope	New	279	279	N/A
	Dyett	New	103	103	N/A
	Douglass	New	63	63	N/A
	Chavez	New	44	44	N/A
	Seward	New	25	25	N/A
	Lozano	New	16	16	N/A

Table for Figure 3: High School Enrollment Declines Most in Grades Nine and Ten

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Total	*106,559*	*105,606*	*106,429*	*105,540*	*100,915*	*97,270*	*94,223*
8th	32,302	30,826	29,938	29,861	30,303	29,356	30,231
APC					1,282	1,946	1,987
9th	33,335	34,128	36,052	35,250	33,183	31,929	32,663
10th	29,023	29,601	29,787	28,311	26,333	25,212	25,913
11th	22,502	21,078	21,012	21,206	20,536	19,447	19,112
12th	17,521	17,203	16,027	17,061	17,163	17,202	16,413
Ungraded	4,178	3,596	3,556	3,712	3,700	3,480	122

Table for Figure 4: Factors Affecting Ninth-Grade Enrollment
Fall 1996 to 1999, Compared to Fall 1995

	Effect on Enrollment *			
	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Size of previous grade in the previous year	- 686	- 678	527	352
Number of new students	- 27	- 352	- 725	- 451
Rate of leaving CPS from the previous grade	71	309	581	596
Dropout rate from the previous grade	248	237	- 108	- 221
Promotion rate from the previous grade	-1,150	-2,224	-2,892	-1892
Promotion rate from this grade	1,159	1,112	- 634	-1090
Grade skipping or reclassification into this grade	- 355	- 690	- 581	- 36
Skipping over this grade	- 11	- 321	- 339	- 685
Other changes	- 123	- 84	- 54	82

* Each enrollment effect represents the impact due to change in that factor alone. Because these factors interact to produce changes in enrollment, the sum of the enrollment effects is not exactly equivalent to the total change in enrollment.

Table for Figure 5: Factors Affecting Enrollment in Grades Ten through Twelve
Fall 1996 to Fall 1999, Compared to Fall 1995

	Effect on Enrollment *			
	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
Grade 10				
Size of previous grade the previous year	1,103	633	- 519	-1,278
Number of new students	- 26	- 421	- 709	- 566
Rate of leaving CPS from the previous grade	28	- 132	- 277	9
Dropout rate from the previous grade	- 837	-1,231	-1,041	- 540
Promotion rate from the previous grade	- 824	- 909	423	738
Promotion rate from this grade	- 454	- 779	-1,527	-1,854
Grade skipping or reclassification into this grade	- 308	54	6	705
Skipping over this grade	- 157	- 260	- 652	- 620
Other changes	- 138	- 322	- 10	53
Grade 11				
Size of previous grade in the previous year	110	- 752	-1,959	-2,625
Number of new students	78	- 47	- 239	- 165
Rate of leaving CPS from the previous grade	157	153	56	134
Dropout rate from the previous grade	- 159	- 110	- 43	- 265
Promotion rate from the previous grade	544	635	1,019	1,183
Promotion rate from this grade	- 397	- 325	- 801	- 919
Grade skipping or reclassification into this grade	138	257	604	977
Skipping over this grade	- 368	- 475	- 563	- 453
Other changes	133	211	324	284
Grade 12				
Size of previous grade in the previous year	- 47	88	- 379	-1,112
Number of new students	23	- 26	- 58	38
Rate of leaving CPS from the previous grade	90	159	83	152
Dropout rate from the previous grade	298	343	406	135
Promotion rate from the previous grade	415	365	764	778
Promotion rate from this grade	- 193	- 178	- 199	- 351
Grade skipping or reclassification into this grade	329	421	501	815
Skipping over this grade	- 197	- 311	- 357	- 513
Other changes	297	296	373	381

* Each enrollment effect represents the impact due to change in that factor alone. Because these factors interact to produce changes in enrollment, the sum of the enrollment effects is not exactly equivalent to the total change in enrollment.

Table for Figure 6: Progression of 13-Year-Olds from the High School Classes of 1996 through 2003

		Age 13	Age 14	Age 15	Age 16	Age 17	Age 18	Age 19
Beginning Fall 1991 (class of 1996)	Not yet enrolled	5,630	3,140	1,553	572			
	On schedule	22,756	21,588	18,296	14,230	11,601	10,679	13,597
	Off schedule	7,067	7,089	8,895	9,437	8,584	6,029	1,525
	Dropout		913	2,255	5,273	8,132	10,851	12,023
	Left		2,644	4,269	5,560	6,476	6,815	6,855
	Other		79	185	381	660	1,079	1,453
Beginning Fall 1992	Not yet enrolled	5,564	2,932	1,480	514			
	On schedule	24,463	22,611	19,092	14,110	12,438	11,593	14,350
	Off schedule	6,794	7,020	8,799	10,601	8,469	5,860	1,514
	Dropout		1,235	2,564	5,201	8,450	11,128	12,286
	Left		2,929	4,673	6,003	6,774	7,139	7,246
	Other		94	213	392	690	1,101	1,425
Beginning Fall 1993	Not yet enrolled	5,557	3,069	1,507	540			
	On schedule	25,908	23,677	18,546	14,846	13,217	12,450	15,327
	Off schedule	6,742	6,781	10,465	11,043	8,398	5,768	1,403
	Dropout		1,358	2,602	5,303	8,756	11,440	12,589
	Left		3,253	4,895	6,086	6,971	7,363	7,383
	Other		69	192	389	865	1,186	1,505
Beginning Fall 1994	Not yet enrolled	5,523	2,975	1,439	456			
	On schedule	25,458	23,333	17,934	14,674	13,452	12,615	15,142
	Off schedule	5,938	6,120	10,322	10,431	7,660	5,220	1,316
	Dropout		1,226	2,312	4,856	8,188	10,872	11,799
	Left		3,193	4,720	6,013	6,833	7,128	7,182
	Other		72	192	489	786	1,084	1,480
Beginning Fall 1995	Not yet enrolled	5,371	2,828	1,427	531			
	On schedule	25,429	22,369	16,867	14,122	12,775	12,449	14,799
	Off schedule	5,655	6,917	10,862	10,097	7,798	5,145	1,319
	Dropout		1,071	2,198	5,112	8,306	10,536	11,600
	Left		3,190	4,854	6,175	6,894	7,206	7,288
	Other		80	247	418	682	1,119	1,449
Beginning Fall 1996	Not yet enrolled	5,154	2,715	1,426	517			
	On schedule	25,364	21,765	17,051	13,816	12,398	11,504	
	Off schedule	5,568	7,343	10,485	10,244	8,126	5,506	
	Dropout		1,088	2,205	5,104	8,061	10,768	
	Left		3,057	4,717	5,997	6,782	7,209	
	Other		118	202	408	699	1,099	
Beginning Fall 1997	Not yet enrolled	5,143	2,837	1,488	560			
	On schedule	24,411	20,697	16,336	13,855	12,612		
	Off schedule	5,890	7,806	10,662	10,139	8,067		
	Dropout		1,148	2,210	4,777	7,526		
	Left		2,889	4,568	5,792	6,591		
	Other		67	180	321	648		
Beginning Fall 1998 (class of 2003)	Not yet enrolled	4,901	2,343	919				
	On schedule	23,412	20,530	16,842	14,396			
	Off schedule	7,194	8,530	10,927	10,307			
	Dropout		1,110	2,084	4,671			
	Left		2,922	4,596	5,859			
	Other		72	139	274			

Percentages in Figure 6 do not include students not yet enrolled.

Table for Figure 7: More Students Off Schedule by Age 15 Recover Status and Fewer Students Go Off Schedule for the First Time between 15 and 17

Cohort		Number of Students Off Schedule at Age 13, 14, or 15	Number of Students On Schedule at Age 13, 14, or 15
1991	*Total number of students*	*11,132*	*24,321*
	Number off schedule at age 17	4,890	3,694
1992	*Total number of students*	*11,071*	*25,750*
	Number off schedule at age 17	4,729	3,740
1993	*Total number of students*	*12,731*	*25,476*
	Number off schedule at age 17	4,971	3,427
1994	*Total number of students*	*12,309*	*24,610*
	Number off schedule at age 17	4,653	3,007
1995	*Total number of students*	*13,198*	*23,257*
	Number off schedule at age 17	4,832	2,966
1996	*Total number of students*	*12,707*	*23,379*
	Number off schedule at age 17	5,070	3,056
1997	*Total number of students*	*13,213*	*22,231*
	Number off schedule at age 17	5,231	2,834

Table for Figure A1: Eighth Grade Enrollment Decreases

	First Time Eighth Graders	All 8th Graders	8th Grade and APC Students
1993-94	31,598	32,302	32,302
1994-95	30,061	30,826	30,826
1995-96	29,222	29,938	29,938
1996-97	28,034	29,861	29,861
1997-98	28,487	30,303	31,585
1998-99	27,381	29,356	31,302
1999-00	28,918	30,231	32,218

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Table for Figure A2: Fewer Students Transfer Into the System

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-00
8th Grade/APC	1,922	1,832	1,804	1,734	1,746	1,823	1,927
9th Grade	3,769	3,513	4,022	4,007	3,656	3,301	3,561
10th Grade	2,304	2,346	2,617	2,596	2,174	1,881	1,992
11th Grade	1,469	1,393	1,382	1,455	1,330	1,136	1,194
12th Grade	645	644	693	718	665	636	729

Table for Figure A3: Fewer Students Leave CPS

Number of Students that Left CPS Since Previous Fall Semester

	Fall 1994	Fall 1995	Fall 1996	Fall 1997	Fall 1998	Fall 1999
8th Grade/APC	3,819	3,651	3,462	3,241	3,155	3,121
9th Grade	2,247	2,306	2,403	2,536	2,546	2,207
10th Grade	1,696	1,800	1,659	1,574	1,552	1,422
11th Grade	921	912	817	761	805	691
12th Grade	248	253	210	240	225	232

Table for Figure A4: Ninth Grade Dropout Rates Rise Dramatically from 1995 to 1997, but Decline in Grades Eleven and Twelve

Percent of Students that Dropped Out Since the Previous Fall Semester

	Fall '94	Fall '95	Fall '96	Fall '97	Fall '98	Fall '99
8th Grade/APC	5.66	5.83	4.96	5.08	6.16	6.57
9th Grade	10.61	10.00	12.30	13.55	13.22	11.87
10th Grade	16.93	14.14	14.69	14.55	14.33	15.28
11th Grade	16.96	13.83	12.41	12.23	11.85	13.15
12th Grade	13.97	11.20	10.06	9.30	8.76	10.62

Number of Students that Dropped Out Since the Previous Fall Semester

	Fall '94	Fall '95	Fall '96	Fall '97	Fall '98	Fall '99
8th Grade/APC	1,829	1,797	1,485	1,517	1,945	2,055
9th Grade	3,537	3,412	4,436	4,777	4,386	3,791
10th Grade	4,912	4,186	4,376	4,119	3,774	3,853
11th Grade	3,816	2,916	2,607	2,593	2,434	2,557
12th Grade	2,448	1,926	1,612	1,587	1,504	1,827

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Table for Figure A5: Repetition Increases in Grade Eight, but Decreases in Grades Ten through Twelve

Percent of Students from the Previous Fall Semester Repeating a Grade this Semester

	Fall '94	Fall '95	Fall '96	Fall '97	Fall '98	Fall '99
8th Grade/APC	2.40	2.34	6.14	9.83	11.48	8.41
9th Grade	11.30	18.77	21.04	21.41	17.58	16.64
10th Grade	13.27	17.85	16.04	15.63	14.01	13.25
11th Grade	8.78	11.31	9.32	9.59	7.58	7.32
12th Grade	6.79	7.68	7.03	6.68	6.56	5.60

Number of Students from the Previous Fall Semester Repeating a Grade this Semester

	Fall '94	Fall '95	Fall '96	Fall '97	Fall '98	Fall '99
8th Grade/APC	775	720	1,837	2,935	3,625	2,633
9th Grade	3,767	6,405	7,585	7,547	5,832	5,313
10th Grade	3,851	5,284	4,777	4,424	3,689	3,341
11th Grade	1,974	2,383	1,959	2,034	1,557	1,423
12th Grade	1,190	1,321	1,126	1,140	1,125	964

Appendix II: Trends in Factors that Affect High School Enrollment

Eighth-Grade Cohort Size

As was shown in Section I, eighth-grade enrollment was relatively steady during the late 1990s (see Figure 3 on page 9). It did decrease by about 7 percent from the fall of 1993 to the fall of 1995, but then increased slightly in the 1997–98 and 1999–00 school years. This recovery was due in part to an increase in eighth-grade retention after the adoption of the promotion policy. Unlike the enrollment of all eighth-grade students, enrollment of first-time eighth graders did not recover its previous levels (see Figure A1). However, because of eighth-grade retention, the pool of students that could potentially move into ninth grade rose during the latter part of the decade.

Number of Students Transferring Into the System

The number of new students entering CPS high schools declined steadily until the 1998–99 school year, after a rise in 1995–96 (see Figure A2).

Number of Students Transferring Out of the System

The number of ninth graders that transferred from CPS to other schools increased slightly from fall 1995 to fall 1997 (see Figure A3). Leave rates from other high school grades decreased slightly. The increase in leave rates from ninth grade was countered by a decrease in leave rates among eighth

Eighth Grade Enrollment Decreases

Figure A1

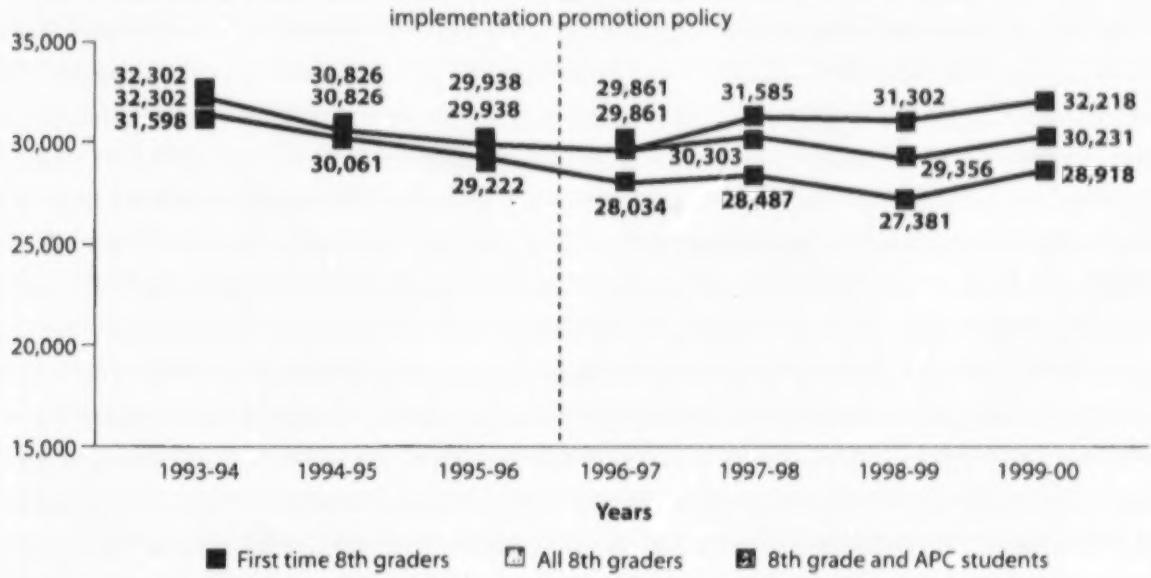

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Figure A2

Fewer Students Transfer Into the System

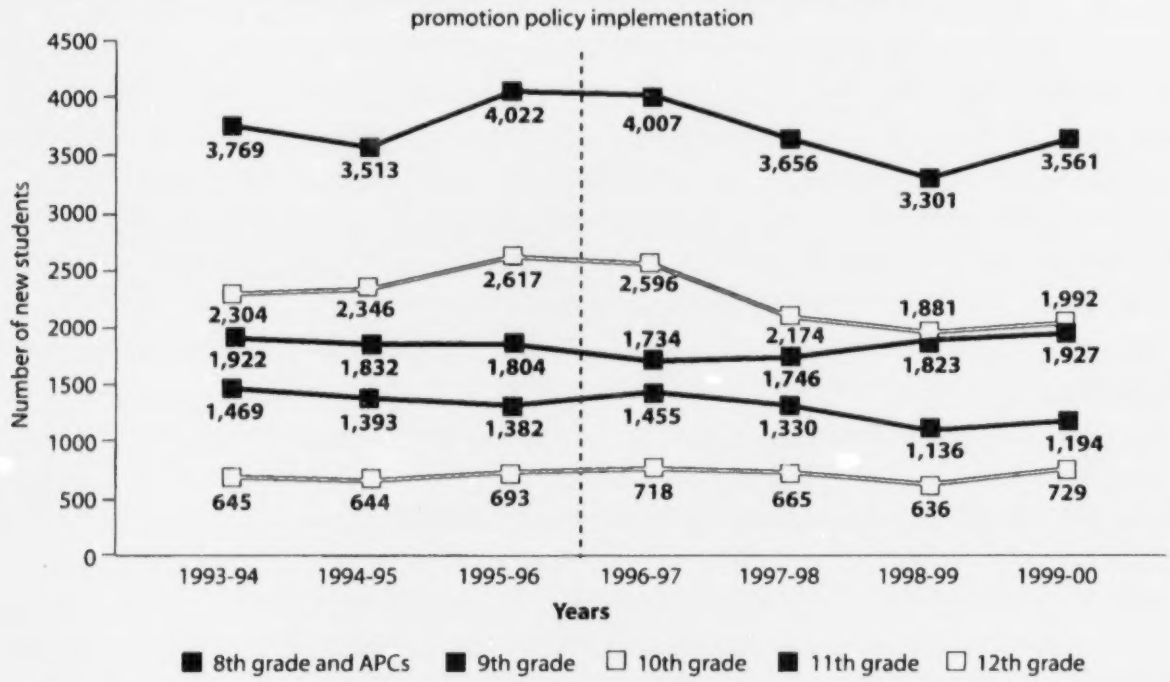
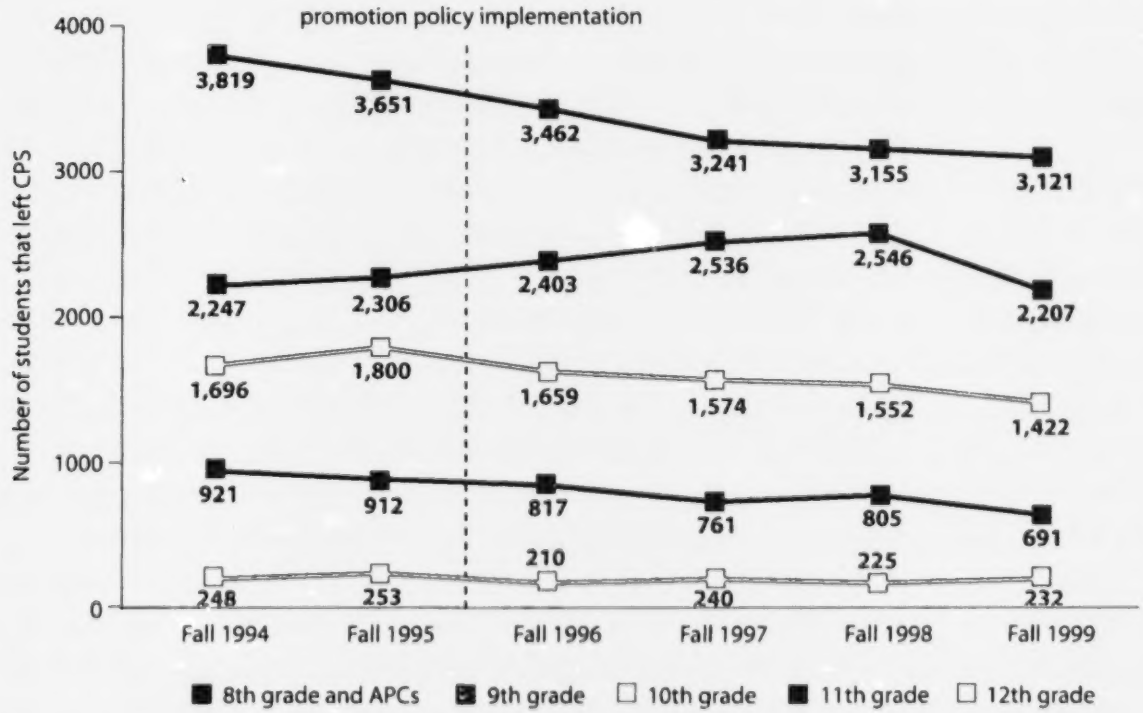


Figure A3

Fewer Students Leave CPS



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graders. The net effect of these changes was small but positive: 248 more students in the system in the 1997–98 school year than in 1995–96.

Change in Dropout Rates

Although dropout rates within each grade fluctuated over this period, the overall rate across all grades remained relatively steady. Between fall 1995 and fall 1997, dropout rates increased for ninth graders. The number of eighth-grade dropouts increased during the following two years (see Figure A4). On the other hand, dropout rates for the upper grades declined between 1994–95 and 1998–99. The large fluctuation in dropout rates that appears in fall 1999 was due to an initiative that year to clean high school student records.

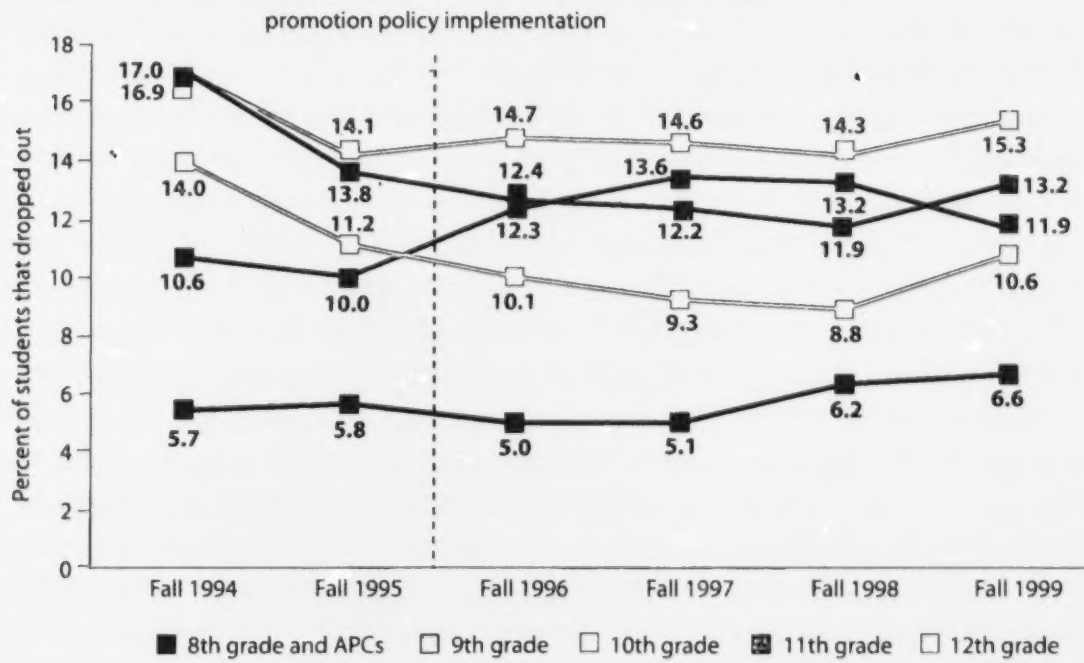
Grade Retention and Repetition of Grade Classification

The percentage of eighth-grade students held back from entering high school grew steadily from 2 percent in fall 1995 to 11 percent in fall 1998 (see Figure A5). Not until fall 1999 were fewer students retained in the eighth grade than in the previous year.

Promotion rates out of grades ten and eleven, and graduation rates out of grade twelve gradually increased throughout the period of this study. Each year, more students were accumulating the credits needed for graduation than in the previous year. (This trend is described in detail in another report in this series, *Student Performance: Course-Taking, Test Scores, and Outcomes.*) By the fall of 1998, a larger

Figure A4

Ninth-Grade Dropout Rates Rise Dramatically from 1995 to 1997, but Decline in Grades Eleven and Twelve



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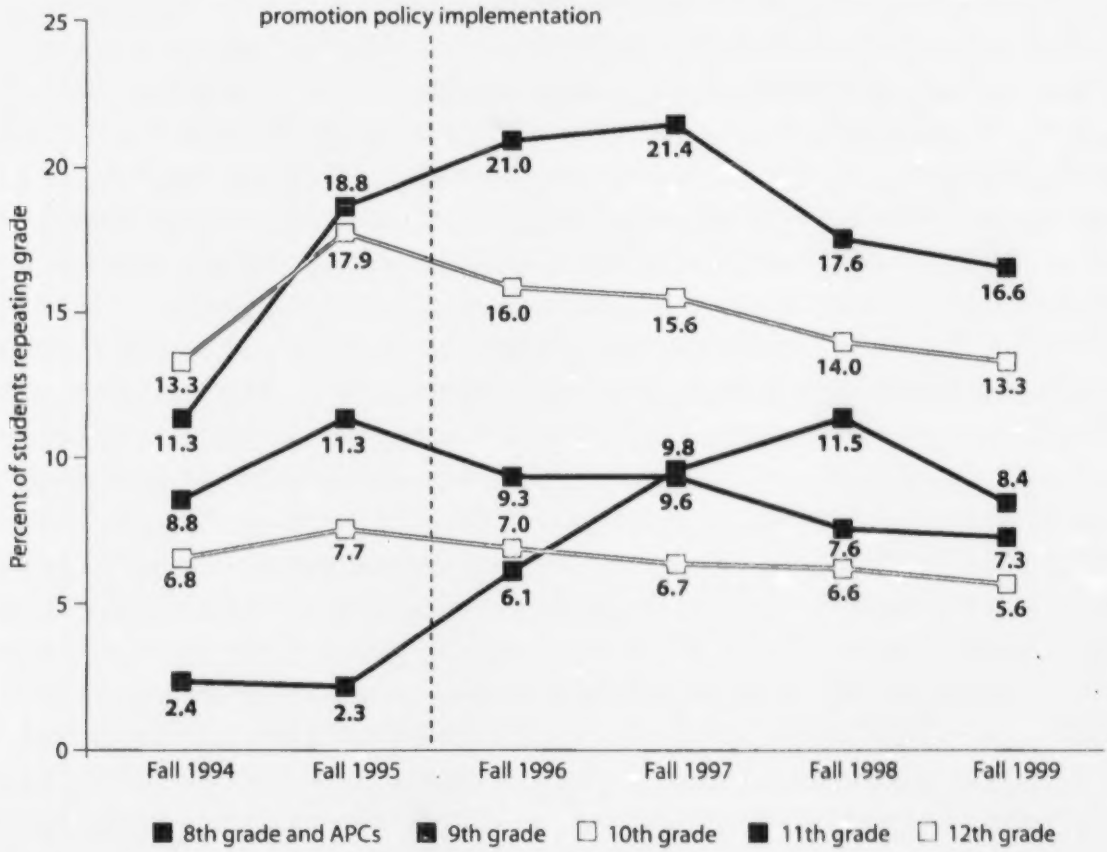
percentage of ninth-grade students also moved onto tenth-grade classification than in earlier years. The only exception to this trend was the high rate of ninth-grade repetition from 1995–96 to 1997–98. Fewer ninth graders met the criteria to move on to tenth grade by the fall of 1995 than had met the criteria by the fall of 1994. The rise in repetition of ninth-grade classification in 1995-96 is likely due to the establishment of the new systemwide minimum promotion requirements adopted in February 1995. (The resolution to establish minimum promotion requirements was to become effective with students who entered high school in fall 1995. However, the new emphasis on a uniform promotion policy seems to have prompted schools to enforce minimum credit requirements immediately, starting in the spring of 1995.) The ninth-grade promotion gate policy took affect the following year, corresponding with a continued rise in ninth-grade repetition. The ninth-grade promotion gate was dropped in 1998–99, resulting in a substantial decrease in repetition of ninth-grade classification.

Figure A5

Repetition Increases in Grade Eight, but Decreases in Grades Ten through Twelve



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Endnotes

[1] The enrollment numbers include all students in grades nine through twelve and special education students enrolled in CPS high schools without grade-level classifications.

[2] If we include all schools that were on probation between the 1995–96 and 1999–00 school years, the average drop is even greater, 21.2 percent.

[3] Individual schools may use different criteria for determining grade assignment. In this report we use the grade designated in the CPS student information system.

[4] Repeating a grade has a different meaning in high school than in elementary school. Students continue to earn credits toward graduation, but their grade-level classifications do not change until they have accumulated sufficient credits and pass any additional requirements for grade promotion.

[5] This trend is described in detail in another report of this series. See *Student Performance: Course-Taking, Test Scores, and Outcomes* (2002).

[6] See *Student Performance: Course-Taking, Test Scores, and Outcomes* (2002).

[7] Most of the 1990 cohort also was enrolled in high school during the 1993–94 school year, but we do not have student records earlier than fall 1991.

[8] See *Student Performance: Course-Taking, Test Scores, and Outcomes* (2002) for a discussion of both these trends.

[9] These statistics represent the system as a whole. It is possible that dropout and graduation rates among specific student populations, particularly low achieving and economically disadvantaged students, have declined because of the promotion gate policy but have been obscured because of better outcomes accompanying the opening of magnet schools and the rising achievement of incoming students. While analyses to test this are beyond the scope of this report, they are part of our continuing work at the Consortium. Initial exploration into differences in trends in student outcomes based on students' background characteristics showed only very small differences in trends for the most disadvantaged students.

This report reflects the interpretation of its authors. Although the Consortium's Steering Committee provided technical advice and reviewed an earlier version of the report, no formal endoresment by these individuals, their organizations, or the Consortium should be assumed.

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